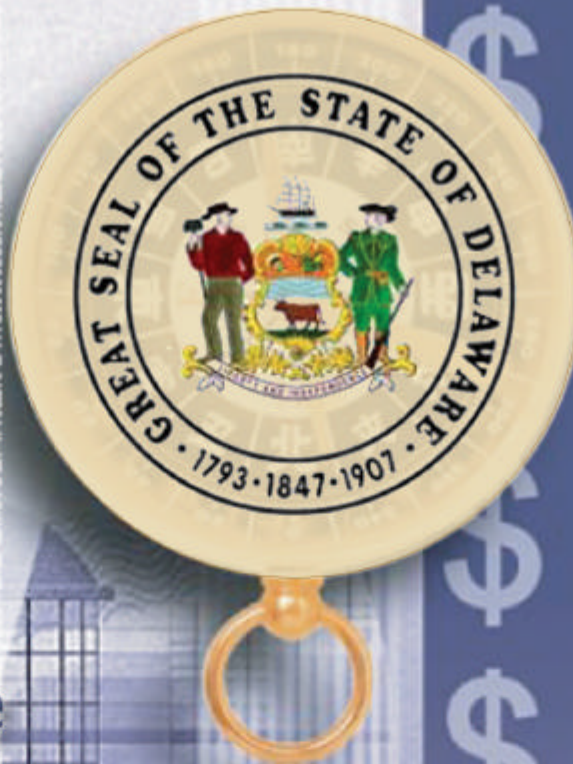


# Delaware Strategies for State Policies and Spending

5 Year Update  
July, 2004



vuurtoren

amsterdam  
25 jul 1985  
secretaris  
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## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this document, as with the original *Strategies for State Policies and Spending* document, is to coordinate land use decision-making with the provision of infrastructure and services in a manner that make best use of our natural and fiscal resources. The importance of such coordination lies in the fact that land use decisions are made at the local level while the bulk of infrastructure (e.g., roads and schools) and services (e.g., emergency services and social services) that support land use decisions are funded by the State.

Thus, the development of this document with local governments and citizens helps to create a unified view toward growth and preservation priorities that all governments can use to allocate resources. To demonstrate the State's commitment to principles of this document, State agencies are directed to fund only those projects that are in compliance with these strategies.

In essence, there are two fundamental policies that guide the State Strategies:

1. State spending should promote quality, efficiency, and compact growth; and,
2. State Policies should foster order and resource protection, not degradation.

It is important to note that none of the maps contained within this document are “parcel-based,” so it is still necessary to thoroughly investigate the constraints of a particular land parcel with the local jurisdiction that controls the land use decision. Thus, any land development activity must meet all of the relevant local codes and ordinances.

This document is intended for a diverse audience including state agencies, local governments, developers, and citizens. The various chapters are organized around topic areas, and tabbed for ease of use.

Following is a brief discussion of the contents of each section of this document.

### **Introduction**

In 1999, the Cabinet Committee on State Planning Issues approved the first State Strategies. The first document was developed to guide state investment decisions to promote efficient development patterns, protect agriculture and open space, discourage sprawl, and communicate with local governments on land use matters. This document is a scheduled five- year update to the original document.

During the update process the Office of State Planning Coordination consulted state agencies, county governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and local governments for comments. State certified municipal and county comprehensive plans were also referred to during the data gathering process.

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In addition, the State Planning Office held a total of 7 public meetings – two in each of Delaware’s three counties, and one in the city of Wilmington to accept the public’s comments on the State Strategies text and maps. Comments were also accepted in writing, through e-mail and also via a specially created online form.

### **Coordinating Government**

Governor Minner developed her Livable Delaware agenda to enhance efforts to implement the State Strategies. To do this she focused her administration’s efforts on administrative and legislative initiatives to strengthen land use planning efforts at the State and local levels. Key initiatives included:

- The issuance of Executive Order 14 – directing State agencies to develop Livable Delaware plans;
- House Bill 255 – a far reaching piece of legislation that created a plan certification process and reformed the annexation process, among other things; and,
- Senate Bill 65 – Preliminary Land Use Services (PLUS) for the review of development projects early in the development process.

### **Directing Growth**

In this update, the map designations have been changed from names, such as “**Community**”, “**Developing**” and “**Rural**” to **Levels 1 – 4** and “**Out-of-Play**” to avoid confusion caused by misinterpreting names. Levels 1 through 3 identify which areas of the state are most prepared for growth and where the state can make the most cost-effective infrastructure investments, for the likes of schools, roads and public safety. In the Level 4 areas where development is not currently preferred, the state will make investments that will help preserve a rural character such as, investments to promote open space and agriculture. Out-of-Play lands are those that generally cannot be developed for reasons including, they are Federal- or State-owned protected lands, parkland, the development rights have been purchased, or State or local regulations prohibit development on them.

### **Investing Effectively**

The State makes significant investments influenced by where and how growth occurs. For instance, 201 schools receive nearly two-thirds of their funding from the State; DelDOT is responsible for maintaining nearly 90% of the over 12,000 lane miles in Delaware (the nationwide average for states is approximately 20%); and the State also funds 14 State Service Centers that deliver more than 160 programs and services to accommodate approximately

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600,000 visits annually. Thus, the need to coordinate with those making land use decisions cannot be stressed enough.

In part, the State Strategies are meant to act as a guide for adequate infrastructure provision throughout Delaware while minimizing the burden on the State's taxpayers. Thus, the three general strategies are:

1. Towns, counties and the state are collectively involved in the infrastructure planning process;
2. Existing infrastructure should be utilized before new infrastructure is constructed; and,
3. When it is necessary to expand new infrastructure, it should be expanded in a logical manner that aims to serve first those areas closest to existing services.

### **Improving Housing Choice**

Various house siting techniques can provide a great deal of cost savings which ultimately can open up housing choices for many more people. In particular use of properly designed compact development can significantly reduce housing costs. Besides the decrease in infrastructure costs (on average, about 32 %) compact development produces a more diverse range of transportation options, a more economical extension of services and utilities, and the location near existing developed areas and higher densities enable natural qualities and agriculture areas to be preserved and protected.

### **Preserving Delaware**

Just as "built" infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer and electric are always carefully planned; so should "green infrastructure" be planned, designed, and invested in. The State has allocated and continues to allocate significant resources for land preservation. Since 1990, the State's Open Space program has invested more than \$209 million to preserve more than 43,000 acres of land. In addition, more than 76,000 acres of agriculture land have been permanently protected with more than \$90 million spent for the purchase of preservation easements. Planning is essential because much of this activity requires contiguous parcels to be effective. The Livable Delaware Advisory Council's Green Infrastructure Subcommittee was charged with recommending strategies for conservation and management of natural resources, recreational lands and working lands. They were also asked to work towards creating an interconnected network of green spaces which this chapter reviews.

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## **Involving Citizens**

The best opportunity for citizens to get involved with land use decision making process is to attend local government public hearings and workshops for local planning commissions and boards of adjustments. The development of a Comprehensive Plan is perhaps the most important step for the town or county. This document sets the overall pattern of land use. Additionally, all land use regulations are based on this document. Many jurisdictions conduct extensive public participation efforts to gauge citizen input on these documents.

## **Promoting Sustainable Jobs**

Quality jobs located in areas that can support them and that enhance Delaware's quality of life is the focus of Delaware's economic development programs. Some of the key issues in promoting sustainable jobs include promoting infill and redevelopment especially of brownfield sites. Making the redevelopment of brownfields easier and more financially attractive has been a key goal of Livable Delaware. Other considerations are promoting cleaner, high-paying jobs of the future to replace jobs in the manufacturing sector and helping Delaware's cities and towns attract entrepreneurs who fuel the New Economy.